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ABSTRACT

Teaching a second language and culture means teaching culturally different patterns of perception, communication, and effect. When teachers of English as a second language develop sensitivity to what students bring to the classroom and understand the students' reasons for their actions, their teaching can aid and not hinder students' full development. Teachers can show acceptance and respect for real cultural differences by planning appropriate teaching materials and by recognizing the child from another culture as a learning resource with wider experiences than most of his or her classmates. This attitude and approach maximize further learning about the native language and allows students to take pride in their heritage. Linguistic bias and damage from ethnocentrism can be erased by helping students interact successfully in a cross-cultural setting rather than in a culture-bound intellectual atmosphere. To understand international students' situations, those who teach them must value cultural diversity and not interpret being different as being deprived. It is very important for teachers to admit the humanness of all people, to become knowledgeable about the world community, and to understand the cultural barriers to effective communication. Because foreign students in the United States often feel very threatened, their comfort should be a primary consideration for language teachers. References and a handout entitled "Parallel Principles of Second Language and Cultural Learning" are appended. (MSE)

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Learning among Culturally Different Populations

by Joy Allameh

Today, we often read about and discuss teaching "the whole student." In fact, the focus is toward learning and away from teaching. Carl Rogers has written that we need real facilitators of learning established by interpersonal relationship with the learner in a context for learning which is properly created. Thus, his humanistic stance emphasizes student-centered teaching. Abraham Maslow has described motivation in terms of a needs hierarchy. Physiological security having been met, then (and only then) can learners satisfy a need of sense of identity and a sense of self-esteem before satisfying the highest need of all, self-actualization, the ability to realize oneself fully including autonomy, integrity, and continual growth. Self-actualizing individuals are capable of making commitments to themselves, to intimate relationships, and to the society in which they live. David Ausubel has put forth the cognitive theory of learning contrasting rote and mechanical learning. Memorization involves mentally storing items having little or no association with existing cognitive structure whereas meaningful learning is more a process of relating (anchoring) new material to what is relevant and already established in the cognitive structure. With all three of the above theorists, we see commitment to meeting the student where he or she is "coming from." Simple recognition that the learner's identity existed

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before my classroom requires a different orientation on my part. Recently, a publisher mailed me an advertisement of a new text entitled Teaching the Head. Teaching this whole cognitive learner would, of course, incorporate the native culture and language.

Arvizu and Snyder have stressed the importance of teachers understanding learning and motivational styles across cultures. Besides the important discovery of cultural differences among others, they cite "a significant increase in self-awareness and personal growth sparked by the comparison of one's own culture with that of others." They define the ideal teacher with geometric impact on change as a cultural broker and mediator as one "who knows him/herself culturally, who can come to know others culturally, who understands his/her impact on others culturally, and who can function as a facilitator of learning in a manner which reflects cross-cultural understanding," in other words, people who can function in different worlds, "mindful of people not only as products of culture but also as active, creative producers of culture."

I teach both developmental English and English Second Language. Three semesters ago as a final essay topic for developmental students (native speakers of English), I gave a choice including "Tell me what you do uncommonly well." Seventy-five percent of the students chose it over four other selections since I suspect it was the first occasion anyone (especially an English teacher) had presumed they did anything well! Papers fairly blossomed with by for the best writing of the

semester. In teaching ESL (non-native English speakers), I have long known how important are the cultural trappings we all carry with us. Just as a student's mother tongue can get in the way of his or her learning English (through interference errors), in much the same way his mother culture can interfere with perception, reception, and production in a second culture. By way of definition, interference in language errors are those rules, constructs, vocabulary in a native language that cause students to test the wrong hypotheses in a second language. The Iranian's asking in Winn Dixie for a pound of beef language when he meant tongue illustrates. The Venezuelan newly arrived at Will Rogers International Airport in Oklahoma City who addressed the Coke machine, after putting in a quarter and reading dime, "Une coca cola!" since dime in Spanish means "tell me" is a second illustration. With help from understanding teachers, international students can overcome both errors.

All of us are born into one cultural group shaped by that group's values. From birth we are taught cultural values as rules, regulations, social codes, and attitudes. Our attitudes about life (such as the role of the family, of government, of religion, of sex, of perception) are part of our cultural baggage or expression. Because language reflects the culture of the people who speak it, we thereby see indices to the people therein. The Marshallese Islanders have more than sixty terms for the coconut. Eskimo speakers have divided snow into seven different categories with seven different verbal labels. The Nuer of the Sudan are extremely interested in cattle. Hanson writes, "The turn of a horn, shape and size of a hump, color and pattern of hide markings are all

topics of endless conversations and inspirations for poetry and song." There is no Japanese word for privacy in the Western conception nor in the Arab world for physical privacy (or rape). Even color separation in the Crayola box varies with the language indicating perceptual differences. For the Navajo blue and green are in a single category, but the English black covers two distinct Navajo colors. Saville-Troike reports on the incident of a teacher of Choctaw children in Oklahoma who thought a child dumb for coloring a duck brown when told to color it yellow. These hues, however, are categorized together under one term in Muskogean languages which means earth color.

Conventions of greetings, leavetakings, eating, dress, ways of being polite or friendly, and attitudes toward time, authority, and space all shape behavior. Each of these greetings, for example, is appropriate in some language: How re you? Where are you from? How much money do you earn? What do you know? What is your name? What do you say? and one should never in greeting an Arab man inquire of the health of his wife!

In all of this, we have not even touched upon what Edward T. Hall calls the hidden dimension, the silent language, and beyond culture: use of space and time, body language, the non-verbal proxemics. He develops the idea that "people reared in different cultures live in different sensory worlds." The part of the environment which is socially transmitted - culture - includes knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, customs, arts, and language, in fact, all that humans learn from

their society including external dimensions of food, dress, art, and language. Perhaps an anecdote will demonstrate cultural reactions to time differences and will show that time represents another potential source of misunderstanding not only by Americans of other cultures outside our national boundaries but also within.

Three Eskimo high school seniors given scholarships to a Washington university flunked out after their first semester. High school counselors who came to Washington to investigate the failure of such promising students found them cowering in their dormitory rooms and discovered they had been terrified by the ringing of bells and classes ending in such a flurry of activity and of the rush of students to other classes to be on time. No one in their village had owned a watch or clock; thus, they were unprepared for the university situation which valued time. Several anthropologists, including Hall, write of time as an element of culture communicating as powerfully as language. Americans, of course, treat time as money. We waste, spend it, save it, earn it, invest it, and are time conscious. We "segment and schedule time, look ahead, and are oriented almost entirely to the future "handling time like a material." We are obsessed with it and value it. Americans in long-term planning in the business world mean five or ten years. The South Asian, however, thinks in terms of thousands of years or even an endless period. The Arab and Iranian look back two to six thousand years using history as the basis for modern action and believe only Allah knows the future and would believe himself or any other person insane to try to plan more than a week ahead. Arabs, in fact,

seem unable to distinguish the difference between a long time and a very long time; they do not make this temporal distinction. In fact, in Arabic, verbs have no tense; rather, only two choices exist for verb selection: an action is either completed or not completed. The Pueblo Indian's sense of time is at variance with ordinary American clocktime. Events begin only when the time is ripe. Language reflects a world view in this regard, for Greek and some dialects of Quechua spoken in Peru and Bolivia consider the future "behind" a person and the past "ahead," instead of the future's being "ahead" as in English. Their logic is supported by our "seeing" the past but not the future. The future we cannot "see" is behind. The Hopi language, also, does not possess tenses. The Hopi does not rely on his imagination to provide him with plurals he cannot detect by his senses and would never use a cyclic noun that refers to days, years or other units of time in the same way that he would use an aggregate noun (men). For him, cycles do not have plurals but instead duration, thus, the Hopi equivalent for the English He stayed five days is He stayed until the sixth day. Farb writes that Hopi culture thinks of time in terms of events, of planting a seed and knowing it will grow; whereas the span of time of growing is not important, the way in which the event of growth follows the event of planting is important. Farb believes, though, that the absence of clocks, calendars, and written histories gave the Hopi a different view of time than that of European speakers but does not believe these cultural differences were caused by the differences between Hopi and European grammars. He does not believe that language tyrannizes speakers forcing them to think in certain ways but instead he places the emphasis on the close alliance between language and the total culture of the speech community.

A Hopi Indian child is not taught competitiveness and will, therefore, never raise his hand to answer correctly, for he would be shamed and embarrassed to get ahead of his fellows. Filipinos laugh with an embarrassed person to prevent his feeling too isolated or inconvenienced. They smile and laugh when angry. A failure to greet someone on every chance meeting the Filipino interprets as aversion.

Hall says that not one gesture universally communicates. A nod means no in Eskimo. Patting a child's (or an adult's) head is the greatest offense in Thailand, for the head is the most pure body part (feet the least). To touch the head then highly offends. The use of touch varies greatly from one culture to another.

Betty Wallace Robinett reports that in a preliminary exploration of tactile behavior, Jourard (1966) observed pairs of individuals chatting in college shops located in different countries and recorded the frequency of touching. Over an hour-long setting for each pair, the scores were: London, 0; Gainesville, Florida, 2; Paris, 110; and San Juan, Puerto Rico, 180.

In the Arab world the person exists deep down inside the body explaining perhaps the public amputation of a thief's hand as standard punishment in Saudi Arabia and the Arab's handling of social and personal distance quite differently from Americans. They feel no outrage at being touched by strangers and prefer standing close enough

in conversation both to feet and smell the breath of the other person. Latin Americans have been known literally to climb over desks and tables to get to what is for them a "comfortable" closeness with other persons in a "proper" conversational zone. The German, unlike the Arab, has an extraordinarily exposed ego and thinks America's flimsy light office doors that are open are sloppy and disorderly. In Germany, public and private buildings (hotels even) often have double doors for soundproofing. Indeed, whether the door is closed or open, it will not mean the same thing to both Americans and Germans.

Eye behavior is also practiced differently culturally. The Englishman blinks his eyes to let the speaker know that he has heard, and proper English listening behavior includes immobilization of the eyes at social distance whereas the American's gaze often wanders from one eye to the other of his conversational partner and even away from the face for long periods. Some Asian, Mexican-Americans, and Indian cultures in order to show respect would never engage in direct eye contact but the persons look down in the presence of superiors. Even when scolded, though, an American child is supposed to look one in the eye. The child who averts his eyes would be respectful in his own culture but considered dishonest by many Anglos.

Even gestures, intonation, volume, facial expressions and behavior are culture specific. Americans scratch the side of their head as they think about the answer to a difficult question, but Japanese scratch the top of their heads. To the Thonga of South Africa, kissing was unknown;

therefore, when they first saw one European kissing another, their shock and amusement caused them to refer to Europeans as "people who eat one another's saliva." A Chinese graduate student at Eastern last spring commented that the Chinese do not kiss, but they believe from seeing American movies that Americans spend most of their time kissing. When Eastern's foreign student advisor of three years ago visited Taiwan, at the airport he asked for information about his hotel. The word for question and kiss is the same with different tones. The young woman whom he questioned thought he asked her to kiss him and was quite upset. I asked my student why the woman would not have guessed that a stranger to her, a newly arrived American in Taiwan, would surely have meant question and not kiss. But my student said, "Oh no, she'd seen American movies and thought it more natural the American wanted to kiss."

Attitudes toward work differ culturally. Because American culture is monochronic, we center our attention on one activity, followed by another. In other cultures, the Navajo, Turkese, Japanese, eastern Mediterranean Arab cultures, and India, for example, just sitting is doing - with no distinction between being active or not. Americans deplore idleness, however, believing it a virtue to work hard and do not mix socializing pleasure with business as does the Latin American, who may at a scheduled appointment have several persons in his office spending the day and using long hours in, what constitutes for him, a happy combination of both activities. Hall writes, "Each culture has its own characteristic manner of locomotion, sitting, standing, reclining, and gesturing." Culture also designates "what we pay

attention to and what we ignore." (Hall, 1977) What a people consider beautiful, humorous, exciting, true, and good is culturally determined. (Hanson, 1975) Unlike other mammals, however, humans have so specialized the language of the body that it is integrated and congruent with everything else we do. Hall maintains, "It is therefore culturally determined and must be read against a cultural backdrop. That is, the significance of a posture or act is only partially readable across cultural boundaries." Significantly as cultural distances increase, chances of being correct readers decrease. Gumperz says, "The more we know about a particular society, the more effectively we can communicate in it."

Hanson contends that culture is not a restricted kind of human activity while all the rest of behavior is something else and that we should study culture in behavior, not in spite of it. Shakespeare wrote in The Winter's Tale, "There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture." Out of the vast repertory of communication possibilities of the human face, legs, hands, torso, and even the posture (tens of thousands of potential expressions and signals), each speech community selects only a limited number.

Erving Goffman, a specialist observer of nonverbal communication, says: "Although an individual can stop talking, he cannot stop communicating through body idiom; he must say either the right thing or the wrong thing. He cannot say nothing." Most gestures and facial expressions, according to Farb, belong to specific speech communities in

the same way that the spoken utterances themselves do. Ray Birdwhistell, a pioneer in the study of gestures as an exact science, says, "We have found no gesture, or body motion which has the same social meaning to all societies."

Farb believes that "language so interpenetrates the experience of being human that neither language nor behavior can be understood without knowledge of both." Brook agrees that "language is the most typical, the most representative, and the most central element in any culture. Language and culture are not separable; it is better to see the special characteristics of a language as cultural entities and to recognize that language enters into the learning and use of nearly all other cultural elements." Hall says it is impossible to think of culture without language or materials. Kroeber and Kluckhahn contend that "every language serves as the bearer of a culture" and that we ought to speak of "language <u>in</u> culture" or of language and the <u>rest</u> of culture." In both language and culture, social inappropriateness and lack of communication (or even worse miscommunication) are possible.

H. Douglas Brown, a specialist in ESL, has written that second language learning involves the acquisition of a second identity since second language learning is second culture learning. It is he who believes in the deeply seated affective nature of second language learning. He has researched the idea that the more positive one feels toward the host culture, the more quickly proficient the learner becomes in his second language.

Certainly, teachers with non-natives in their classrooms can become cultural interpreters with tolerance and fairness perceiving their own biases and learning to recognize that cultural differences do not represent deficiencies or threats. Harry Triandis calls it the major social problem of our time, the poor interpersonal relationships among individuals who belong to different cultures. He writes, "Aggression is common across racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic boundaries." When individuals are trained to understand the subjective culture of other groups, there is some evidence of improved intergroup relationships.

Even here in the U.S., Hall writes "The voice, feet, hands, eyes, body, and space are all handled differently between lower-class blacks and lower middle-class whites." Both parties often misread each other's behavior. American whites and blacks often minimize the importance of culture. Hall contends, "Most important, we have consistently failed to accept the reality of different cultures within our national boundaries." Blacks, Indians, Spanish Americans, Puerto Ricans have been treated as "recalcitrant, undereducated, middle-class American of northern European heritage instead of what they really are: members of culturally differentiated enclaves with their own communication systems, institutions, and values." Believing only in superficial differences among the peoples of the world, Americans miss not only the richness of knowing others but also the cues to correct actions when difficulties

develop. Hall emphasizes that even when small fragments of culture are perceived, they are difficult to change "not only because they are so personally experienced but because people cannot act or interact at all in any meaningful way except through the medium of culture."

In teaching a second language and culture, we teach culturally different patterns of perception, communication, and effect. If we develop sensitivity to what the student brings to the classroom and understand his reasons for his actions, our teaching can aid and not hinder his full development. A teacher can be aware of the very real cultural differences in "food habits, family structure, values, attitudes, and means of expressing affection, grief, and embarrassment" planning appropriate teaching materials accordingly with acceptance and respect for these differences. Recognizing the child as a learning resource with wider experiences and information than most of his/her classmates can maximize further learning about the native language and culture and can allow the student room for pride in his heritage, constituting no barrier to Americanization.

I am handing out to you from "A Behavioral Analysis of Culture Learning" by George M. Guthrie a table entitled "Parallel Principles of Second Language and Second Culture Learning" which I lifted verbatim and which will illustrate the significance of one's native culture.

Linguistic bias and damage from ethnocentrism can surely be erased with real assistance to students helping them to interact successfully in a cross-cultural setting rather than in a culture-bound intellectual atmosphere.

To understand the international student's situation, we who teach them must value cultural diversity, must not out of our ethnocentric concepts interpret being different as being deprived, must admit the humanness of not only ourselves but the other four billion others through global awareness, must become knowledgeable about the world community and sensitive to cultural difference, and finally must understand the cultural barriers to effective communication. My objective in the ESL classes I teach is to create a cheery, pleasant working place that draws the students attracting them so that they contribute, satisfy themselves, and feel unthreatened in a relaxing atmosphere. Through the many years I have taught students from such a variety of backgrounds, I have encountered many in my classes from native countries experiencing war, civil and otherwise, strife from a variety of causes, and disintegration of native country. If American freshmen face adjustment problems and require counseling in great numbers though living in dormitories an hour from home, I consider the international on campus in greater jeopardy. Thus, the students' comfort constitutes a primary consideration.

PARALLEL PRINCIPLES OF SECOND LANGUAGE
AND SECOND CULTURE LEARNING

	Language		Culture
1.	Acquired early, relatively fixed by the age of five.	1.	Acquired early, relatively fixed by the age of five.
2.	New language learned more easily by younger children.	2.	New culture patterns are learned more easily by children than adult.
3.	First language structures habits of thinking.	3.	First culture determines habits of valuing.
4.	A new language has a new set of pitch levels which one must learn.	4.	A new culture has a new range of gestural and other expressive movements which are interpretable by the participants.
5.	First language determines most of the errors in learning the second.	5.	First culture introduces errors in interpretation of second culture.
6.	An accent remains which reveals the first language.	6.	Patterns from the first culture continue to distort and influence the expression of patterns from the new.
7.	In instances of severe frustration or illness reverts to his first language.	7.	When the life is difficult one reverts to his childhood or early patterns of relationship.
8.	One can usually express best his deepest feelings in his first language.	8.	One can express best his deepest values in overt behavior patterns that are of long standing. It is more difficult to learn a new way of expressing love than a new style of clothing.
9.	One ponders his deepest personal values and problems in the words and concepts of his language.	9.	One feels most deeply either favorably or unfavorably in terms of his first learned value system. One's first culture determines one's most profound emotions.

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